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ABSTRACT

Currently accepted principles of communicative approaches to second language pedagogy are examined to determine the extent to which they are grounded in theories of language, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and other language-related disciplines. The discussion of communicative approaches distinguishes the notions of communicative competence and communicative performance. Various theories of communicative competence are examined, and the advantages and disadvantages of a communicative approach for general second language programs are discussed. A theoretical framework for communicative competence is proposed, and its implications for second language teaching and testing are considered. The proposed framework of communicative competence includes three main competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Grammatical competence includes knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology. Sociolinguistic competence is made up of sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. Strategic competence is made up of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies. Some suggestions for research are also suggested. (SW)

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Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing

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Ontario

Communicative Approaches to Second Language Teaching and Testing

MICHAEL CANALE and MERRILL SWAIN

PL 011553

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Introduction

The present position paper represents an initial stage in our broader research effort to determine the feasibility and practicality of measuring what we will call the 'communicative competence' of students enrolled in 'core' (similar to general) French as a second language programs in elementary and secondary schools in Ontario. Thus in this paper we have chosen to examine currently accepted principles of 'communicative approaches' to second language pedagogy by determining the extent to which they are grounded in theories of language, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and other language-related disciplines. The examination of the theoretical bases has led us to question some of the existing principles, and in turn to develop a somewhat modified set of principles which is consistent with a more comprehensive theoretical framework for the consideration of communicative competence. These principles serve as a set of guidelines in terms of which

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communicative approaches to second language teaching methodologies and assessment instruments may be organized and developed. Such a theoretical analysis is crucial if we are to establish a clear statement of the content and boundaries of communicative competence--one that will lead to more useful and effective second language teaching, and allow more valid and reliable measurement of second language communication skills.

The organization of this paper is as follows. First we will provide a general background to communicative approaches, distinguishing the notions of communicative competence and communicative performance. Then we will examine various theories of communicative competence that have been proposed, discussing the advantages and disadvantages of a communicative approach for general second language programs. Next we will propose a theoretical framework for communicative competence and examine its implications for second language teaching and testing. Finally we will suggest some directions for research that bear either directly or indirectly on our own research goals.

1

Background

1.1. Grammatical and communicative approaches

For our purposes it is useful to make a general distinction between grammatical (or grammar-based) and communicative (or communication-based) approaches to second language teaching. In choosing these particular terms we hope to avoid the confusion that has resulted from use of the more inclusive terms 'formal' and 'functional' (cf. Stern 1978 for discussion). By a grammatical approach we mean one that is organized on the basis of linguistic or what we will call grammatical forms (i.e. phonological forms, morphological forms, syntactic patterns, lexical items) and emphasizes the ways in which these forms may be combined to form grammatical sentences. Most teaching materials currently in use in general second language courses are organized along these lines: for example, the Lado English series and the series Le français international. A communicative (or functional/notional) approach on the other hand is organized on the basis of communicative functions (e.g. apologizing, describing, inviting, promising) that a given learner or group of learners needs to know and emphasizes the ways in which particular grammatical forms may be used to express these functions appropriately. Second language textbooks developed within this framework, such as the

Challenges series (Abbs et al. 1978) and the series Communicate (Johnson and Morrow 1978), have begun to appear but are in general limited to English as a second language.

A third approach referred to quite often in recent work on second language teaching is the situational syllabus (cf. Morrow 1977, Munby 1978, Wilkins 1976). This approach is organized primarily with reference to the particular settings (or situations) in which the learner may need to perform in the second language.[1] Ockenden's (1972) Situational dialogues is cited frequently as an example of teaching material developed from this perspective. While it is clear that the three approaches are logically distinct, in this paper situational syllabuses will simply be subsumed under either the grammatical or communicative approach. There are two reasons for this decision. First, as has been pointed out by Morrow (1977), grammatical syllabuses often present the grammatical forms under study in dialogues or contexts that are labelled 'situations'. However, to the extent that the basis of syllabus organization is the grammatical forms and not the situations themselves, the approach is essentially a grammatical one. Second, to the extent that the main reasons for including a given situation in a situational syllabus are to respond to the learner's sociocultural needs and to generate appropriate language, there seems to be sufficient overlap in objectives between situational approaches and communicative approaches to justify relaxing the distinction. The work of Johnson and Morrow (1978) illustrates this point quite clearly.

Other types of approaches are of course possible and have surfaced

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1. See also the related and interesting ideas of Candlin (1977) on what he refers to as an 'encounter syllabus', where emphasis is put not on communicative functions (or speech acts) as such but on exploring how the various aspects of speech events (cf. Hymes 1967) can influence what is said and how it is said.

in second language research and materials (cf. Candlin 1977 and Cook 1978 for discussion). Again, although we think that these approaches are all logically distinct, we will not distinguish them here in view of the overlap of their main objectives and those of the grammatical or communicative approaches.

The brief descriptions of grammatical and communicative approaches provided above are intended to serve as general working definitions throughout the rest of this paper. Also, although it should be clear, it is important to note that the term 'approach' is used here to refer to principles of syllabus construction and not to actual classroom teaching materials and methods (cf. Wilkins 1978 for such a use of this term). More detailed descriptions of communicative approaches will be provided in Section 2.

1.2. Competence and performance

The terms 'competence' and 'performance' are used frequently in discussions of second language approaches. Since these terms are used differently by various researchers and signal important distinctions for the purposes of second language teaching and testing, it is worthwhile to discuss them in some depth.

Chomsky (1965) introduced the terms 'competence' and 'performance' in modern linguistics through statements about the methodological necessity of studying language through idealized abstractions and ignoring what seem to be irrelevant details of language behavior. As Campbell and Wales (1970) have pointed out, Chomsky (1965) uses these terms in both a weak sense and a strong sense. The weak sense of these terms is implied in the following passage:

> We thus make a fundamental distinction between competence (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his

> language) and performance (the actual use of language in concrete situations)....In actual fact, it [performance] obviously could not directly reflect competence. A record of natural speech will show numerous false starts, deviations from rules, changes of plan in mid-course, and so on (Chomsky 1965:4, his emphasis).

Thus competence refers to knowledge of grammar and of other aspects of language while performance refers to actual use. Campbell and Wales (1970) accept the methodological distinction between knowledge or ability and actual performance as an 'eminently honorable' one in any discipline. In fact, most linguists do seem to accept this weaker claim. A notable exception is Halliday (1970), who rejects it as either unnecessary (if the distinction refers merely to what we can describe in the grammar and what we cannot) or misleading if, for example, it restricts the data one considers. We agree with his implication (and with Chomsky's 1976 explicit statement) that theoretical assumptions as to what are and what are not relevant data in a given discipline can be dangerous and must not be accepted as dogma leading to the exclusion of other research lines.

Chomsky's (1965) stronger claim is that competence refers to the linguistic system (or grammar) that an ideal native speaker of a given language has internalized whereas performance mainly concerns the psychological factors that are involved in the perception and production of speech, e.g. perceptual parsing strategies, memory limitations, and the like. Given this perspective, a theory of competence is equivalent to a theory of grammar and is concerned with the linguistic rules that can generate and describe the grammatical (as opposed to ungrammatical) sentences of a language. A theory of performance, on the other hand, focusses on the acceptability of sentences in speech perception and production, and is a theory of the interaction between the theory of

grammar and the set of nongrammatical psychological factors bearing on language use. Consider, for example, the sentences in (1).

(1) a. the was cheese green (ungrammatical)
b. the cheese the rat the cat the dog saw chased ate was green (grammatical but unacceptable)
c. the dog saw the cat that chased the rat that ate the cheese that was green (grammatical and acceptable)

According to our own intuitions, (1a) differs from both (1b) and (1c) in terms of grammaticality but (1b) and (1c) differ with respect to acceptability: i.e. (1b) is more difficult to interpret and produce than (1c).

Hymes (1972) and Campbell and Wales (1970) were among the first to point out that this stronger version of the competence-performance distinction provides no place for consideration of the appropriateness or sociocultural significance of an utterance in the situational and verbal context in which it is used. For Campbell and Wales (1970) 'by far the most important linguistic ability' is that of being able to 'produce or understand utterances which are not so much grammatical but, more important, appropriate to the context in which they are made' (p. 247, their emphasis). Hymes (1972) asserts somewhat less boldly that 'there are rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless' (p. 278). His point is illustrated clearly in his discussion of a (hypothetical) child who has the ability to understand and produce any of the grammatical sentences in a language. We quote:

> Consider now a child with just that ability. A child who might produce any sentence whatever--such a child would be likely to be institutionalized: even more so if not only sentences, but also speech or silence was random, unpredictable (Hymes 1972: 277).

He continues:

> We have then to account for the fact that a normal child acquires knowledge of sentences, not only as grammatical, but also as appropriate. He or she

> acquires competence as to when to speak, when not, and as to what to talk about with whom, when, where, in what manner. In short, a child becomes able to accomplish a repertoire of speech acts, to take part in speech events, and to evaluate their accomplishment by others. This competence, moreover, is integral with attitudes, values, and motivations concerning language, its features and uses, and integral with competence for, and attitudes toward, the interrelation of language with the other code of communicative conduct [viz. social interaction] (Hymes 1972:277-278).

In view of Chomsky's (1965) strong claim that competence is to be associated exclusively with knowledge of rules of grammar, both Hymes (1972) and Campbell and Wales (1970) propose a broader notion of competence, that of communicative competence. This notion is intended by them to include not only grammatical competence (or implicit and explicit knowledge of the rules of grammar) but also contextual or sociolinguistic competence (knowledge of the rules of language use). Furthermore, Hymes (1972) explicitly and Campbell and Wales (1970) implicitly adopt the distinction between communicative competence and performance, where this latter notion refers to actual use.

However, there is some diversity of opinion in the literature as to (i) whether or not the notion 'communicative competence' includes that of 'grammatical competence' as one of its components and (ii) whether or not communicative competence should be distinguished from (communicative) performance.

As concerns (i), it is common to find the term 'communicative competence' used to refer exclusively to knowledge or capability relating to the rules of language use and the term 'grammatical (or linguistic) competence' used to refer to the rules of grammar. The terms are used in this manner by, for example, Allen (1978), Jakobovits (1970), Palmer (1978), Paulston (1974), and Widdowson (1971). It is equally common to find these terms used in the manner in which Hymes

(1972) and Campbell and Wales (1970) use them; thus one finds them employed in this way by Connors et al. (1978), Cooper (1968), Morrow (1977), Munby (1978), and Savignon (1972), among others. Munby (1978) claims that the view that communicative competence includes grammatical competence is to be preferred to the view that it does not since the former view logically excludes two possible and misleading conclusions: first, that grammatical competence and communicative competence should be taught separately, or the former should be taught before the latter; and second, that grammatical competence is not an essential component of communicative competence. We find his first reason unconvincing since even if one adopts the position that communicative competence includes grammatical competence, it is still possible to maintain that the teaching of grammatical competence could be separate from or precede the teaching of sociolinguistic competence. Munby's second reason, however, is to us both convincing and important. Just as Hymes (1972) was able to say that there are rules of grammar that would be useless without rules of language use, so we feel that there are rules of language use that would be useless without rules of grammar. For example, one may have an adequate level of sociolinguistic competence in Canadian French just from having developed such a competence in Canadian English; but without some minimal level of grammatical competence in French, it is unlikely that one could communicate effectively with a monolingual speaker of Canadian French (ignoring, with Clark 1972, the quite limited 'communication' that nonverbal means permit). Note that in adopting the view that grammatical competence is an essential component of communicative competence, we nonetheless agree with Widdowson (1978) that in normal conversation native speakers will focus more on language use than on grammar. We will return to this point in Section 2.3.

Let us turn now to (ii), the issue of whether or not communicative competence should be distinguished from (communicative) performance. It is fair to say that almost all researchers dealing with communicative competence do (at least implicitly) maintain this distinction. One exception, mentioned above, is Halliday (1970 and elsewhere). Another is Kempson (1977), who adopts Chomsky's (1965) strong position that competence refers exclusively to rules of grammar and identifies the notion of communicative competence with a theory of performance. This seems to be a common view among linguists working within the Chomskyan paradigm (cf. Dresher and Hornstein 1977, for example). Kempson reasons as follows:

> A theory which characterises the regularities of language is a competence theory; a theory which characterises the interaction between that linguistic characterisation and all the other factors which determine the full gamut of regularities of communication is a theory of performance....A theory characterising a speaker's ability to use his language appropriately in context, a theory of communicative competence, is, simply a performance theory (1977:54-55).

She claims further that the strong version of the competence-performance distinction makes a difference of logical priority between the study of the language users' knowledge of their language, which she identifies as competence, and the study of the use of that knowledge, or performance in her terms. That is, the study of competence must logically precede the study of performance (cf. also Chomsky 1965 on this point). We do not question this claim so much as its interpretation given Kempson's identification of competence as grammatical competence and performance as communicative competence. We disagree with her exclusion of what we have called sociolinguistic competence from the study of competence; nor are we convinced that a description of grammatical competence must be logically prior to one of socio-

linguistic competence, as her interpretation would imply. It seems entirely reasonable to assume, on the contrary, that there are rule-governed, universal, and creative aspects of sociolinguistic competence just as there are of grammatical competence. A position that ignores these properties of the knowledge of language use would be subject to criticism quite parallel to that levelled by Chomsky (1965) against traditional and structuralist linguistics. Our view, then, is that the study of sociolinguistic competence is as essential to the study of communicative competence as is the study of grammatical competence. It is reasonable to assume then that regularities in both the user's knowledge of grammar and knowledge of language use can be abstracted from their actual realization in performance and studied independently of nonessential or nonspecific (in Campbell and Wales' 1970 terminology) features of performance.

To summarize, we have so far adopted the term 'communicative competence' to refer to the relationship and interaction between grammatical competence, or knowledge of the rules of grammar, and sociolinguistic competence, or knowledge of the rules of language use. Communicative competence is to be distinguished from communicative performance, which is the realization of these competencies and their interaction in the actual production and comprehension of utterances (under general psychological constraints that are unique to performance). In Section 3.2 we will propose a third system of knowledge to be included in a theory of communicative competence.

We think it is important to maintain these basic definitions for second language teaching and testing purposes. For example, if a communicative approach to second language teaching is adopted, then principles of syllabus design must integrate aspects of both grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence. Furthermore, teaching

methodology and assessment instruments must be designed so as to address not only communicative competence but also communicative performance, i.e. the actual demonstration of this knowledge in real second language situations and for authentic communication purposes. It is also important to keep in mind that one cannot directly measure competence: only performance is observable. We will return to these points in more detail in Sections 3 and 4.

Several other points about these definitions should be kept in mind throughout the rest of this paper. First, by adopting the position that communicative competence (minimally) includes both grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence, we do not assume that communicative competence is the highest or broadest level of language competence that can be distinguished or that is relevant for second language teaching purposes. This point is not made clear in the majority of research studies on communicative competence, although the assumption that communication is the essential purpose of language is widespread (cf. Campbell and Wales 1970, Groot 1975, Habermas 1970, Munby 1978, Searle 1969, for example) and would seem to imply that communicative competence is the most inclusive language competence. This assumption will be discussed in Section 3; for the moment we wish only to point out that in this paper communicative competence will be viewed as a subcomponent of a more general language competence, and communicative performance viewed as one form of more general language performance.

Second, we have used the notion of competence--be it communicative, grammatical, or whatever--to refer to underlying knowledge in a given sphere. Hymes (1972) reasons that this notion should refer not only to tacit knowledge but also to ability for use. He states:

> Certainly it may be the case that individuals differ with regard to ability to use knowledge...: to interpret, differentiate, etc. The specification of ability for use as part of competence allows for the role of noncognitive factors, such as motivation, as partly determining competence. In speaking of competence, it is especially important not to separate cognitive from affective and volitive factors, so far as the impact of theory on educational practice is concerned...(Hymes 1972:283, his emphasis).

It seems reasonable to characterize communicative performance as including factors such as volition, motivation, and pathology (organic or functional) that may influence the range of choices of action one has in a given domain. However, we hesitate to incorporate the notion of ability for use into our definition of communicative competence for two main reasons: (i) to our knowledge this notion has not been pursued rigorously in any research on communicative competence (or considered directly relevant in such research), and (ii) we doubt that there is any theory of human action that can adequately explicate 'ability for use' and support principles of syllabus design intended to reflect this notion (cf. Chomsky 1975 for relevant discussion). There is also the fear that by introducing the notion of ability for use as an essential component of communicative competence, one allows the logical possibility of language users having 'linguistic deficits' (or 'communicative deficits'), i.e. inadequate language competence resulting in social class and power differences (cf. the early work of Bernstein--for example, Bernstein 1965--for a discussion of this view). This latter view has been criticized on sociolinguistic grounds by Dittmar (1976), and raises political and philosophical problems similar to those discussed by Bracken (1973). It is thus not clear to us that inclusion of ability for use in our definition of communicative competence would have any practical applications for communicative syllabus design or that it is worth dealing in our research with the

issues regarding the notion of 'linguistic deficit' that this inclusion would provoke.

A third aspect of our basic definitions of communicative competence and communicative performance concerns the place of general psycholinguistic factors (e.g. memory, perceptual strategies). We have assumed that these factors are nonspecific to communicative competence and should thus be treated as aspects of communicative performance, as suggested by Campbell and Wales (1970). Other researchers have suggested that such factors should be included in the notion of communicative competence (e.g. Hymes 1972, Jakobovits 1970). Our only reason for omitting these factors from our basic notion of communicative competence is that they are normally thought of as general psychological constraints on, among other things, the actual production and comprehension of sentences (cf. Bever 1970 for discussion of this point), and we can find no compelling reason for including them in a model of communicative competence. Of course, these factors may still be relevant to communicative syllabus design: for example, as concerns the sequencing of grammatical structures.

Finally, it should be emphasized that although we consider that the study of communicative competence should focus minimally on the relationships and interaction between regularities in grammatical competence and regularities in sociolinguistic competence (as noted by Munby 1978 and discussed above), we also feel that certain aspects of each type of competence can be investigated on their own merit. Thus just as there are regularities in a user's knowledge of language use that can be studied independently from grammar itself (e.g. the appropriateness of a speaker's intended meaning in a given sociolinguistic context, regardless of how this meaning is expressed verbally), so there are regularities in a user's knowledge of grammar that can be

studied independently from sociolinguistic context (e.g. formal and substantive linguistic universals as discussed by Chomsky 1965). This point tends to be ignored in most research on communicative competence. We mention it since we feel that a theory of communicative competence will only be as strong as the individual theories of competence (grammatical, sociolinguistic, or other) on which it is based.

2

Some Theories of Communicative Competence

Our discussion up to this point has been quite general. However, in order to arrive at a theory of communicative competence that is suitable for our research purposes, it is useful to consider in some detail some of the theories of communicative competence that have been proposed. There are many different ways in which these theories can be classified and presented; we have chosen to begin with what we consider to be theories of basic communication skills and work up to more comprehensive and integrated theories. It should be made clear that our classification of the different theories to be considered is based solely on the emphasis which each puts on grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, other areas of competence, and their components; there are few models of communicative competence that neglect important aspects of communication completely. In this section then we will present several representative theories and examine their aims, theoretical bases, and some empirical data bearing on each, where available. We will also discuss some advantages and disadvantages of these theories with reference to second language approaches for general programs.

2.1. Theories of basic communication skills

Theories of basic communication skills, more so than the other

types of communicative theories we will examine, seem to be designed with general second language programs in mind. A theory of basic communication skills can be characterized as one that emphasizes the minimum level of (mainly oral) communication skills needed to get along in, or cope with, the most common second language situations the learner is likely to face. Thus Savignon (1972) is concerned mainly with the skills that are needed to get one's meaning across, to do things in the second language, to say what one really wants to say. Schulz (1977) expresses a similar concern. Van Ek (1976) states as the general objective for the 'threshold level' for general second language programs that 'the learners will be able to survive (linguistically speaking) in temporary contacts with foreign language speakers in everyday situations, whether as visitors to the foreign country or with visitors to their own country, and to establish and maintain social contacts' (pp. 24-25). Much of the research on basic communication skills tends to put less emphasis on other aspects of communicative competence such as knowledge of the appropriateness of utterances with respect to sociocultural context (e.g. Rivers 1973, Schulz 1977, and some of the early research discussed by Paulston 1974) or knowledge of discourse (e.g. Savignon 1972, Van Ek 1976). Furthermore, some of the communicative approaches based on this work do not emphasize grammatical accuracy (e.g. Palmer 1978, Savignon 1972).

It is not always clear just what skills are included in theories of basic communication skills. For example, Savignon (1972) makes explicit reference only to grammatical skills (e.g. pronunciation, vocabulary), communicative tasks with respect to particular communicative functions (e.g. greeting, leave-taking, information-getting, information-giving), and other factors such as willingness to express oneself in the second language, resourcefulness in making use of limited grammatical

skills, and knowledge of kinesic and paralinguistic aspects of the second language (e.g. facial expressions, gestures). The criteria she adopts for evaluating the communicative performance of her students include effort to communicate, amount of communication, comprehensibility and suitability, naturalness and poise in keeping a verbal interaction in hand, and accuracy (semantic) of information. However, she provides no description or specification of the grammatical and other skills required in, say, information-getting, nor is there any empirical justification of the criteria for evaluation.

Van Ek (1976) provides perhaps the clearest statement of basic communication skills that we have come across. His model emphasizes 'language functions' (or communicative functions) and 'notions', and considers only in second place what language forms must be known to give expression to these functions and notions. He supplies lists of general language functions (e.g. imparting and seeking factual information, getting things done by someone, socializing), specific language functions (e.g. under the general heading 'imparting and seeking factual information' are included identifying, reporting, correcting, and asking), general notions (e.g. existential, spatial, temporal), specific notions (e.g. names, addresses, likes and dislikes), topic areas (e.g. personal identification, house and home, travel, food and drink), settings (e.g. home, school), and roles (e.g. stranger, friend). All of these factors are involved in determining the particular inventories of vocabulary, structures, and grammatical categories that he proposes. But in spite of these specifications, there are serious gaps in the description of certain skills. For example, there is no description of any rules of language use bearing on appropriateness of utterances, even though factors such as role, topic, setting, notion, and function are considered in the model.

As concerns the theoretical bases of theories of basic communication skills, we think it is important to consider two principles: (i) that these theories can be said to specify a minimum level of communication skills and (ii) that more effective second language learning takes place if emphasis is put from the beginning on getting one's meaning across, and not on the grammaticalness and appropriateness of one's utterances.

Consider (i). There is no clear sense in which any theory of language that we are familiar with specifies what minimum level of skills is necessary to communicate in a given language. Notions of a minimum level based on language varieties such as pidgins and creoles (cf. Bickerton 1975, Hymes 1971, for example) are of no clear relevance, since these language varieties are generally not mutually comprehensible with the superordinate and subordinate languages they are based on. Furthermore, the notion of a minimum or threshold level as used by Van Ek (1976), for example, is in no way clearly related to the notion of a threshold level as it is understood by psycholinguists such as Cummins (1979). In this latter's work it is suggested that there may be threshold levels in the native language that the learner of a second language must attain in order to avoid cognitive disadvantages, and that must be attained in the second language to allow the potentially beneficial aspects of bilingualism on cognitive development and educational achievement to develop. Cummins (1979) mentions no attempts to characterize the psycholinguistic notion of threshold level in the manner in which Van Ek (1976) characterizes the communicative notion, and it is not clear whether a description of the former notion would be more or less comprehensive than the latter or in what ways the two descriptions would overlap. It would certainly be worthwhile to investigate the notion of threshold level that Cummins proposes in more

detail before deciding whether or not to adopt certain aspects or all of Van Ek's model. For example, a close examination of the communicative competence of the immersion students discussed by Swain (1978) might be carried out with reference to Van Ek's model. Such an examination might be especially relevant and instructive since the immersion studies described by Swain (1975, 1978) are cited by Cummins (1979) as evidence for the positive effects that bilingualism can have on cognitive functioning and academic achievement.

Consider now (ii), the view that more effective second language learning takes place if emphasis is placed immediately on getting one's meaning across rather than on the grammaticalness and appropriateness of one's utterances. With respect to emphasis on meaning over grammaticalness, it is quite reasonable to assume that since in acquiring a first language the child seems to focus more on being understood than on speaking grammatically, then second language acquisition might be allowed to proceed in this manner. Furthermore, since in first language acquisition most parents and peers seem to be more interested in finding out what a child has to say than in how he/she says it, then the second language teacher might assume a similar role to provide a more natural context for second language learning. However, although both neurological (e.g. Lenneberg 1967, Penfield and Roberts 1959) and cognitive (e.g. Piaget 1954) theories suggest that similarities might be expected to exist in acquiring first and second languages in childhood, the onset of lateralization (Scovel 1978) and of formal operations (Krashen in press, Rosansky 1975) in early adolescence significantly affects the means by which new language data are processed and stored. Effective teaching of a second language should take this into account by modifying the presentation of the material to suit the dominant processing mechanisms of the learner.

Thus although the view that second language teaching should mirror parental 'teaching' of the first language may be appropriate with respect to young learners of a second language, we hesitate to endorse it in relation to adolescent and adult learners for several reasons. First, although it is clear that certain learner errors are the same in first and second language acquisition (cf. Dulay and Burt 1974, for example), others are clearly not--for example, interlanguage transfer (cf. Canale, Mougeon, and Beniak 1978, Schachter and Rutherford 1979, for example). Thus not all the grammatical inaccuracies a second language learner makes are necessarily those that a native speaker of the second language is likely to overlook, either because the latter does not expect them or finds it otherwise difficult to process them for meaning. Second, it is not clear that adolescent and adult second language learners themselves are prepared or willing at the early stages to put emphasis exclusively on getting their meaning across. Davies (1978) summarizes a number of studies of adolescent and adult second language learners that suggest that receptive skills should be emphasized at the early stages of introductory classes but that production skills should not. Savignon (1972) found that college students in her experimental class, in which emphasis was put on getting one's meaning across rather than on grammaticality, showed a significant drop in integrative motivation (i.e. the desire to think and act like a native speaker of French) when compared with groups of students in which emphasis was not put on getting one's meaning across. She comments that 'it may be hypothesized that the initial difficulty as well as shock experienced by some in being asked to perform like native Frenchmen was responsible for the decrease in integrative orientation' (Savignon 1972:60). Third, it is not clear that second language learners will develop grammatical accuracy in the course of their

second language program if emphasis is not put on this aspect from the start. It may be that certain grammatical inaccuracies will tend to 'fossilize'--i.e. persist over time in spite of further language training--more when grammatical accuracy is not emphasized at the beginning, resulting in a more or less permanent classroom 'inter-language', i.e. a language system that may satisfy basic communicative needs in the classroom but does not correspond entirely to the language systems used by native speakers of the second language (cf. Selinker 1974, Selinker, Swain, and Dumas 1975, and Swain 1974, for discussion of these notions). There are no data from later stages of study available on the groups Savignon (1972) examined, but there are some data from studies of primary immersion programs suggesting that even with young children, grammatical accuracy in the oral mode does not improve much after a certain stage, perhaps when the learners have reached a level of grammatical accuracy adequate to serve their communicative needs which, importantly, do not typically include interaction with native French speaking peers (cf. Harley and Swain 1978).

As to the other aspect of (ii), that is, that emphasis should be put on getting one's meaning across rather than on the sociocultural appropriateness of utterances, two comments seem relevant. First, it may well be the case that there are more or less universal conditions of appropriateness that hold for the common communicative functions that a second language learner in the early stages of a program is likely to be concerned with (cf. Widdowson 1975 on this point). For example, it is reasonable to assume that the appropriateness conditions for giving a command in any language include the speaker's belief that the hearer has the ability and right to see that the command is carried out, that the speaker has the right to give a command to the hearer,

and so forth. Of course, certain aspects of the appropriateness conditions for a given communicative function will not be universal; our point, however, is that second language learners may already have acquired an adequate knowledge of appropriateness conditions for their basic communicative needs in the second language just by having acquired such knowledge for communicative needs in the first language.

Second, it is not clear that native speakers of the second language expect second language learners at the early stages of a program (or even at later stages) to have mastered sociocultural rules bearing on appropriateness. Perhaps of relevance here are B.J. Carroll's (1978) tentative findings suggesting that native speakers of a language are more tolerant of second language learners' 'stylistic failures' (e.g. not understanding stylistic features or not using appropriate language--cf. Munby 1978:92) than of their grammatical inaccuracies. However, it is also not clear how widely native speakers vary in their tolerance of sociocultural failures, what sociocultural contexts can be associated with different levels of tolerance, and so forth. Nor is it clear whether tolerance of grammatical inaccuracies that do not interfere too much with meaning is higher or lower than tolerance of sociocultural failures. Answers to such questions are important if second language learners' and teachers' expectations of tolerance to grammatical and sociocultural inaccuracies are to correspond to actual levels of tolerance shown by different groups of native speakers of the second language. We will return to these points in Section 3.

There are some empirical data from the field of language testing bearing on theories of basic communication skills. We think it is instructive to consider those data that concern the extent to which grammatical competence is acquired in second language courses organized on the basis of these theories and the extent to which communicative

competence is acquired in courses organized on the basis of theories of grammatical competence.

Although it is a frequently expressed opinion that grammatical competence is not a good predictor of communicative competence (cf. Upshur 1969, for example), one of the first empirical studies dealing with this question in a rigorous manner is that of Savignon (1972). She studied the communicative skills and grammatical skills of three groups of college students enrolled in an introductory audiolingual French course in the U.S. All three groups received the same number of hours of instruction in the standard (formal and grammatical) program, but one group had an additional class-hour per week devoted to communicative tasks (where the emphasis was mainly on getting one's meaning across), the second group devoted an additional hour to a 'culture lab' program, and the third spent an additional hour in a language laboratory program. We will refer to these as the communicative competence (CC) group, the culture group, and the grammatical competence group respectively. She found that although there were no significant differences among groups on tests of grammatical competence, the CC group scored significantly higher than the other two groups on four communicative tests she developed. The first test was a discussion in French between a student and a native speaker of French on one of three topics; the second an information-getting interview in which the student had to find out as much information as possible about the native speaker by asking him questions; the third a reporting task in which the student had to discuss a given topic first in English, then in French; and the fourth a description task in which the student had to describe an ongoing activity. The criteria of evaluation for these tests have been mentioned above (p.16). The total testing time for each student was thirty minutes. She claims that 'the most significant

findings of this study point to the value of training in communicative skills from the very beginning of the [foreign language] program' (Savignon 1972:9).

Another study reporting that grammatical competence is not a good predictor of communicative skills is discussed by Tucker (1974). He and several students conducted an experiment in both Cairo and Beirut. Two groups of subjects were selected: one group had scored very high (95th percentile) in English language proficiency as demonstrated on the Michigan Test of English Language Performance and the Test of English as a Foreign Language, and the other group had scored much lower (60th percentile) on these tests. In one of the communicative tests given to these subjects, the testee was asked to describe an object or picture so that a listener on the other side of an opaque screen could identify the object or picture from among an array of such items before him. On three of four such communicative tests, no significant difference was found between the performance of these groups of subjects. That is, 'the individuals who were relatively low in their measured proficiency in English (i.e. their ability to manipulate grammatical transformations and so on) were able to communicate as effectively and as rapidly in English as were the individuals of high measured proficiency in English' (Tucker 1974:219).

Similar findings are reported by Upshur and Palmer (1974). In their study, the measured linguistic accuracy of Thai students who had learned English through formal classroom training was not found to be a reliable predictor of their measured communicative abilities.

It seems that an appropriate conclusion to draw from these three studies is that focus on grammatical competence in the classroom is not a sufficient condition for the development of communicative competence. It would be inappropriate, however, to conclude from

these studies that the development of grammatical competence is irrelevant to or unnecessary for the development of communicative competence (given that all the subjects in each study did have grammatical training).

Savignon's (1972) reported finding that the CC group did just as well on the grammatical tests as the other two groups suggests that attention to basic communication skills does not interfere in the development of grammatical skills. Two other studies dealing with language testing data are relevant to this finding. Schulz (1977) reports on a study of two groups of students of introductory French differing in that one group was given only communicative tests (developed by her) and the other given only grammatical tests. She found that the former group did no better than the latter group on overall communicative posttests and performed at a significantly lower level on overall grammatical posttests. Thus her findings suggest that a communicative approach that is implemented in the classroom through a testing program but not through teaching or syllabus design is no more effective than a grammatical approach in developing communicative skills and less effective than a grammatical approach in developing grammatical skills. Palmer (1978) studied two groups of students of English who differed in that one group's classroom materials were modified to communication tasks while the other group's materials were kept standard (e.g. dialogues, grammar exercises, listening comprehension exercises). He found that the first group scored significantly lower than the second group on one of the grammatical tests (viz. a pronunciation test) but performed at the same level as the second group did on all other grammatical tests and on all communicative tests administered. He is careful to point out, however, that the teaching objectives for both groups of students dealt with

language use skills, that the communicative tasks did not involve language use for personal or realistic needs, and that the students in the standard program were involved in quite a bit of conversation in English with the instructor (the author) outside the classroom. Thus it is not clear that the two groups differed in any substantive sense with respect to the amount of attention devoted to the development of communicative competence. It would therefore be inappropriate to interpret Palmer's findings as evidence that attention to basic communication skills interferes in the development of grammatical skills or, for that matter, that using communicative materials in the classroom does not enhance communicative skills.

Many of the points discussed in this section will be examined further in Section 3. However, it may be helpful to summarize certain aspects of our view of theories of basic communication skills at this point.

First, there seem to be no strong theoretical reasons for emphasizing getting one's meaning across over grammatical accuracy at the early stages of second language learning. In fact there seem to be a number of reasons for not doing so, as we pointed out. These findings must not be taken to mean that grammatical accuracy should be emphasized over getting one's meaning across, however. There is evidence against this view from a number of sources (aside from the well-known and warranted frustration on the part of students and teachers as concerns strictly grammatical approaches). Oller and Obrecht (1968) found that the effectiveness of pattern drills is significantly increased when the language in the drill is related to communication. Their conclusion is that from the very beginning of a second language program, aspects of grammatical competence should be taught in the context of meaningful communication. Oller and Obrecht

(1969) report a similar finding in another study. Thus some combination of emphasis on grammatical accuracy and emphasis on meaningful communication from the very start of second language study is suggested. It must be noted that there is certainly no reason to focus on all aspects of grammar before emphasis is put on communication, nor does there seem to be a reason to focus on aspects of grammar that are not immediately related to the learner's second language communication needs at a given stage of instruction (cf. Belasco 1965 on this point).

Second, there appears to be some reason to emphasize getting one's meaning across (or communicating) over explicit concerns about appropriateness at the early stages of second language study. The primary motivation for this view is the assumption that the appropriateness conditions that hold for the most common communicative functions differ little from language to language in certain fundamental respects. This is certainly a conservative and reasonable assumption, one that would have to be confronted with falsifying evidence before a more complicated hypothesis was advanced. Certainly these appropriateness conditions may be considered to be more universal than certain aspects of grammatical competence that are crucial to the verbal expression of meaning (e.g. vocabulary), and which may be quite arbitrary from one language to another. Of course, many questions bearing on this view (such as the ones raised above concerning tolerance of errors in language use) remain to be studied. But it seems quite reasonable, in our opinion, to hold off on explicit emphasis on sociocultural aspects of language use at the early stages of second language study in general programs. Instead, one might begin with a combination of emphasis on grammatical accuracy and on meaningful communication, where such communication is generally organized according to the basic communication needs of the learner and according to the communicative

functions and social contexts that require the least knowledge of idiosyncratic appropriateness conditions in the second language.

Finally, it would seem that unless a (basic, at least) communicative approach is adopted for the classroom, there is little reason to expect that students will acquire even basic communication skills in a second language. Grammatical approaches that incorporate only a communication-based testing component (e.g. Schulz 1977) or communicative tasks where no personal or realistic communication takes place (e.g. Palmer 1978) would seem to be no more (or less) effective than an unmodified grammatical approach for developing communicative competence; and in fact they may be less effective than an unmodified grammatical approach in developing grammatical competence (e.g. Schulz 1977). However, basic communicative approaches such as the one adopted by Savignon (1972) would seem to be just as effective as grammatical approaches in developing grammatical competence and more effective than grammatical approaches in developing communicative competence.

2.2. Sociolinguistic perspectives on communicative competence

Research on communicative competence from sociolinguistic perspectives has been of a more theoretical and analytic nature than work on basic communication skills. Although there have perhaps been few direct applications of this research to general second language programs (cf., however, Kettering 1974, Paulston and Bruder 1976, Paulston and Selekman 1976), the work of Halliday and Hymes in particular has inspired many of the communicative approaches that have been proposed. It is worthwhile then to examine some of the assumptions and components of their theories of language in its social context.

Two aspects of Hymes's research are of particular interest: his theory of communicative competence, and his analysis of the ethnography of speaking.

As noted in Section 1.2, Hymes (1972) has rejected the strong version of competence for language that Chomsky (1965) adopted--where this competence is equivalent to grammatical competence--and proposed a theory of competence that includes the language user's knowledge of (and ability for use of) rules of language use in context. The actual theory of communicative competence that he suggests comprises knowledge (and abilities) of four types:

1. Whether (and to what degree) something is formally possible;
2. Whether (and to what degree) something is feasible in virtue of the means of implementation available;
3. Whether (and to what degree) something is appropriate (adequate, happy, successful) in relation to a context in which it is used and evaluated;
4. Whether (and to what degree) something is in fact done, actually performed, and what its doing entails (Hymes 1972:281, his emphasis).

Communicative competence is thus viewed by Hymes as the interaction of grammatical (what is formally possible), psycholinguistic (what is feasible in terms of human information processing), sociocultural (what is the social meaning or value of a given utterance), and probabilistic (what actually occurs) systems of competence. Thus a given utterance may be, for example, ungrammatical with respect to a particular grammar (e.g. the was cheese green with respect to Standard Canadian English), unacceptable or awkward in terms of a particular perceptual strategy (e.g. the cheese the rat the cat the dog saw chased ate was green with reference to a perceptual constraint on processing multiple centre-embedded clauses), inappropriate in a particular social context (e.g. saying good-bye in greeting someone), or rare in a particular community or situation (e.g. saying may god be with you instead of good-bye, bye-bye, or the like in ending a routine telephone conversation). In Section 1.2 we expressed the opinion that it is not necessary to include psycholinguistic competence in one's model of communicative competence; we will maintain this opinion, although there seems to be

little at stake on this point for second language teaching since perceptual strategies, memory constraints, and the like would seem to impose themselves in a natural and universal manner rather than require conscious learning on the part of a student. However, the inclusion of probabilistic rules of occurrence in Hymes's model seems to be an important aspect of language use that is ignored in almost all other models of communicative competence (however, Widdowson 1978 mentions this factor). Knowledge of what a native speaker is likely to say in a given context is to us a crucial component of second language learners' competence to understand second language communication and to express themselves in a native-like way (cf. Morrow 1977 and Oller 1979 for related discussion). We will return to this aspect of Hymes's model in Section 3.2.[2]

Hymes has spearheaded most of the recent work that is devoted to the description of sociocultural competence, i.e. the basis for judgments as to the appropriateness of a given utterance in a particular social context. He has proposed the term 'ethnography of speaking' (Hymes 1964, 1967, 1968) to refer to the system of factors and rules that make up the structure of speaking or communication in a group and that are the basis for the social meaning of any utterance. We will be concerned here primarily with the components of speech events.

Hymes (1967) employs the notion of speech event to refer to activities or aspects of activities that are governed directly by rules

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2. As Daina Green (personal communication) has pointed out to us, the relationship between appropriateness and probability of occurrence in Hymes's model is not clear. We share her view that if a given form is relatively infrequent in a certain context, then it is also more likely (statistically) to be inappropriate in this context. However, she agrees with us that the relationship between appropriateness and probability is by no means straightforward, since it is quite normal to find a given form used appropriately in a context in which it has possibly never occurred previously; for example, the present sentence has quite likely never been written before, but in the present context it is nonetheless appropriate, we think.

of language use. For example, a speech event such as a private conversation would have rules of use associated with it that differed from those associated with a church sermon. A major aspect of the ethnography of speaking is the analysis of speech events in terms of their constitutive components. These are: participants (e.g. speaker and hearer, sender and receiver), setting (i.e. physical time and place), scene (i.e. psychological or cultural setting), the actual form of a message (i.e. a linguistic description of the message), topic (i.e. what the message is about), purpose (i.e. goal, intention), key (e.g. serious, mock), channel (e.g. oral, written), code (i.e. language or variety within a language), norms of interaction (e.g. loudness of voice, when and how to interrupt, physical distance between participants), norms of interpretation (i.e. how different norms of interaction or violations of them are interpreted), and genre (e.g. casual speech, poem, prayer, form letter).

According to Hymes, these components of speech events are crucial to the formulation of rules of language use and to the analysis of the social meaning of utterances. Although some progress toward these ends has been made within Hymes's framework (cf. in particular Ervin-Tripp 1972, Hymes 1967, and references cited in both articles), many of the basic issues remain to be clarified. For instance, it is not clear that all of these components are always crucial in all speech events (as pointed out by Hymes 1967). Allen and Widdowson (1975) point out that 'utterances can take on an enormously wide range of meanings in different contexts' and that 'not only is there a difficulty in establishing how <u>many</u> contexts to consider when specifying the range of appropriateness of an utterance, but there is the problem of knowing how <u>much</u> of the context is relevant' (p.88, their emphasis). Hymes (1967) suggests that hierarchies of precedence among components may

emerge but notes that it is not clear that any ranking of components can yet be established. Walters (1978) reviews a variety of research studies showing that contextual factors such as setting, topic, and the sex, age, and race of the participants are the most salient in their effect on variation in requests, but there is much less research on variation in the expression of other communicative functions. Van der Geest (1978) reports on a communication analysis system that takes into consideration such factors as situation variables, role variables, communication variables, and syntactic variables; he stresses, however, that only a relatively small part of communication is able to be handled within this system. Furthermore, it is not clear how rules of language use should be expressed formally (though see the work and suggestions of Ervin-Tripp 1972 and Hymes 1972). It is quite reasonable to conclude with Hymes (1967), Morrow (1977), Stratton (1977), Walters (1978), and Widdowson (1975), among others, that relatively little is known about how social context and grammatical forms interact. Nonetheless, we find the notion of sociolinguistic competence to be a crucial one in a theory of communicative competence and particularly deserving of research with respect to second language teaching and testing. More detailed directions for research in this area will be pointed out in Section 4.

Consider now the work of Halliday on sociosemantic aspects of language and language use. One of the most significant aspects of his research has been the development of a 'meaning potential' approach to language, primarily at the clause level rather than at the discourse level (cf., however, Halliday and Hasan 1976). Halliday (1973, 1978) views language essentially as a system of meaning potential, i.e. as sets of semantic options available to the language user that relate what the user can do (in terms of social behavior) to what the user can

say (in terms of the grammar). The process involved in language production is one in which a social system determines sets of behavioral options (what speakers can do) which are realized as sets of semantic options (what they can mean, or the meaning potential) which in turn are realized as sets of grammatical options (what they can say). Halliday (1973, 1978) has suggested that his approach to linguistic interaction is not unlike that advocated by Hymes (1972, for example), where the notion of a socially constrained meaning potential is similar to Hymes's notion of communicative competence.[3]

We find it reasonable to distinguish the three levels of options in Halliday's model; however, there are some points to consider with respect to the direction of influence from level to level. As concerns the claim that grammatical options are the (direct) realization of semantic options, there is little ground for disagreement. It is one of the axioms of modern linguistics that any human language can express any meaning in some way. To our knowledge there is no convincing evidence for the alternative views that semantic options are determined

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3. Widdowson (personal communication) has suggested that there is a possible discrepancy between the views of Hymes and Halliday, which can lead to what in his view is a misunderstanding about the relationship between grammatical competence and 'ability to use language'. He states:

> Hymes, essentially, looks at language and use in correlational terms--certain forms are used for certain functions because they are. There are rules of grammar here and rules of use there....Halliday looks at language and use in integrational terms--certain forms are used for certain functions because they have the potential to be so used. The rules of grammar adumbrate rules of use, so to speak, and these include both conceptional (ideational) and communicative (interpersonal/textual) functions.

Our own view is that the models of language and communication proposed by Hymes and Halliday are more similar than Widdowson's above characterization would imply, but that Hymes (especially Hymes 1972) adopts a more psychological approach and Halliday a more sociological one. See Halliday (1978:37-8) on this last point.

by grammatical options or that certain meanings are inexpressible (as opposed to not normally expressed) given the grammars of certain languages.

Munby (1978) has taken the significance of this claim for pedagogical purposes to be the theoretical support it gives to program designers, materials and test developers, and teachers to approach the development of grammatical competence from the standpoint of meaning, from the very beginning. We agree that meaningful communication should be emphasized as a means of facilitating the acquisition of grammatical competence from the beginning, but nonetheless maintain that meaningful (verbal) communication is not possible without some knowledge of grammar. It may be more realistic to view the normal process at the beginning of such learning as one in which what can be said (grammatical options) determines in some way what can be meant (semantic options) in the second language. That is, the meanings (and perhaps some of the social behavior options) that one is able to exploit through the second language are restricted by the grammatical means of expression that have been mastered. Given this latter perspective on second language learning, it is not surprising to find that many of the students in Savignon's (1972) communicative competence class--where emphasis was put on getting one's meaning across--emphasized their difficulties in thinking of the right vocabulary and structures on her tests of communicative competence. Nonetheless, it is quite possible that at later stages of second language learning, in particular after a good basic command of grammar has been acquired, grammatical options are more of a direct realization of semantic options rather than the reverse. It is possible that one way to facilitate and perhaps speed up the onset of this normal interaction between semantic options and grammatical options is to try to base the specification of the grammatical options to be learned on the particular

communicative needs of the learner. This possibility is suggested by the plausible assumption that there is a close relationship between the learner's communicative needs and those semantic options (and social behavior options) that he/she is most likely to express.

Let us turn now to Halliday's claim that semantic options are the realization of social behavior options. This view seems to be reductionist in at least two ways. First, it is obvious that semantic options are constrained by certain aspects of human cognition. Halliday would certainly admit this point but has maintained (e.g. in Halliday 1978) that his orientation and goals in linguistics are socially, not psychologically, oriented. Second, we see no compelling reason to give primacy to social behavior options over semantic options in characterizing what one can mean in a language. We would certainly not agree that one is limited to expressing semantically only what social conventions, for example, allow; one may choose to violate or ignore such conventions. In fact until it is shown that there are any strong social limits on what one may choose to mean, Halliday's position would not seem to differ substantively from the opposite position, namely that meaning options determine social options. Furthermore, language can be used with little or no reference to social context in many different ways: for example, in honest self-expression, in organizing one's ideas, and in creative uses of language (cf. Chomsky 1975 for related discussion). It is not clear why, then, semantic options must be viewed exclusively as the realizations of social behavior options. Halliday himself has made this point:

> We would not be able to construct a sociosemantic network for highly intellectual abstract discourse, and in general the more self-sufficient the language (the more it creates its own setting...) the less we should be able to say about it in these broadly sociological, or social, terms (Halliday 1973, cited in Munby 1978:14).

It seems clear that a theory of natural language semantics must make reference to social behavior options if it is to be of relevance to a theory of communicative competence; but such social options do not seem sufficient to account for the sets of intentions or other semantic options available to the language user.

In summary, the sociolinguistic work of both Halliday and Hymes is important to the development of a communicative approach in that they have been concerned with the interaction of social context, grammar, and meaning (more precisely, social meaning). We find that there is still little known about rules of language use and about the manner in which and extent to which semantic aspects of utterances are determined (and grammatical forms selected) on the basis of social context. Nonetheless, work in these areas is crucial to the statement of specifications, objectives, and evaluation criteria within a communicative approach.

2.3. Integrative theories of communicative competence

The theories of communicative competence that we have examined to this point have focussed mainly either on the minimum (oral) communication skills needed to cope in a second language situation (e.g. Savignon 1972, Van Ek 1976) or on the interrelation between language and social context (e.g. Halliday 1973, Hymes 1967). These theories cannot be considered to be integrative in that they devote relatively little attention to how individual utterances may be linked at the level of discourse and do not provide an integration of the different components of communicative competence. In our view, an integrative theory of communicative competence may be regarded as one in which there is a synthesis of knowledge of basic grammatical principles, knowledge of how language is used in social contexts to perform communicative

functions, and knowledge of how utterances and communicative functions can be combined according to the principles of discourse. Such theories are discussed in the work of, for example, Allen (1978), Allen and Widdowson (1975), Candlin (1975, 1978), Morrow (1977), Munby (1978), Stern (1978), Widdowson (1975, 1978), and Wilkins (1976). These theories might also be viewed as integrative in that they focus on speaking, listening, writing, and reading rather than on a subset of these skill areas. The most recent and comprehensive of such theories that we have examined is that proposed by Munby (1978). Since a detailed review of Munby (1978) is in preparation (Candlin forthcoming), we will focus only on general aspects of his framework, discussing other studies as they relate to it.

The theoretical framework that underlies Munby's model of communicative competence consists of three major components: a socio-cultural orientation, a sociosemantic view of linguistic knowledge, and rules of discourse. The sociocultural component is based quite heavily on the work of Hymes discussed in the preceding section (2.2), and there is little that we can add here.

We also have little to say about the discourse component in Munby's model, both because we are still relatively unfamiliar with the work in this field and because there seems to be no theory of discourse that one can turn to with confidence. In our opinion, the clearest and most directly applicable description of discourse for second language teaching is that discussed by Widdowson (1978). He makes a fundamental distinction between cohesion and coherence in spoken or written discourse. Cohesion is a relational concept concerned with how propositions are linked structurally in a text and how the literal meaning of a text is interpreted. In the work of Halliday and Hasan (1976), five main types of cohesion are isolated:

anaphoric reference (e.g. use of pronouns to refer to something mentioned previously, as in I gave it to them); substitution, which is quite similar to the first type (e.g. substitution of one for a book in Mary has a book. I wish I had one); ellipsis, which is omission of a grammatical element that has been expressed already (e.g. John doesn't have a book, nor do I, where have a book is not repeated); conjunction, which involves the use of such grammatical connectors as soon (temporal), and (additive), although (adversative); and lexical cohesion (e.g. direct repetition of the same term to refer to the same object rather than the use of different terms to refer to the same object). Coherence is concerned with the relationships among the communicative values (or contextual meanings) of utterances. Widdowson (1978:29) provides the following example to illustrate this notion:

A. That's the telephone.
B. I'm in the bath.
A. O.K.

Although there is no overt signal of cohesion among these utterances, they do form coherent discourse to the extent that A's first proposition has the value of a request, that B's remark functions as an excuse for not complying with A's request, and that A's final remark is an acceptance of B's excuse. Note how important the notions of setting, role of participants, goals, and so forth are in arriving at a coherent interpretation of these utterances (e.g. consider the setting to be the subway as opposed to a home).

Other approaches to the analysis of discourse are reported in the literature and deserve mention. Among the studies that approach discourse as part of a theory of social interaction are those on conversational analysis (e.g. Fine 1978, Goffman 1978, Grice 1975, Labov and Fanshel 1977, Sacks, Schegloff, and Jefferson 1974), analysis of classroom discourse (e.g. Chaudron 1977, Hermann to appear, Sinclair

and Coulthard 1975), the definition and classification of speech acts (e.g. Austin 1962, Searle 1976), the role of discourse routines in language acquisition (e.g. Bates 1976, Bruner 1978) and in interpretation of utterances (e.g. Candlin 1978), and the relation between the choice of utterances and social status (e.g. Olson 1978). More formal linguistic approaches are reflected in the work of Harris (1952) and Hurtig (1977) as well as in work on artificial intelligence (e.g. Shank and Nash-Webber 1975 and references cited there). In addition to Halliday and Hasan (1976), an approach from the viewpoint of stylistics has been adopted by Benson and Greaves (1973) and is reflected in the work of Allen and Widdowson (1974). Representative work from a variety of research perspectives is presented by Freedle (1977) and Grimes (1975). It is not unfair to say that all of this work is still at an embryonic stage.

As concerns the sociosemantic component of Munby's theoretical framework for communicative competence, several points warrant discussion.

First, Munby adopts the theoretical position suggested by Halliday (1973) that we discussed in the preceding section, i.e. the view of language as semantic options derived from social structure. Our reservations about this position concern its application to communicative approaches to second language teaching. In particular, we do not accept the view that grammatical options in the second language are best handled at the <u>early</u> learning stages as arising only from semantic options and indirectly from social options. Although Munby does suggest that considerations of appropriateness and generalizability of grammatical forms should be involved in determining actual grammatical options, these criteria, and the process suggested, seem inadequate. For example, nowhere is there reference made to the relative grammatical

complexity of forms as a constraint on the semantic options and social behavior options that may be selected, or even as a constraint on the grammatical options selected via his processing model. We think that at some point prior to the final selection of grammatical options, semantic options, and social behaviour options, grammatical forms must be screened in terms of the following: (1) grammatical complexity (e.g. the structures and lexical items that must be mastered to produce a given form spontaneously); (2) transparency with respect to the communicative function of an utterance (e.g. I suggest you try the fish is a more clear-cut and obvious grammatical encoding than Have you never tried our fish?, The fish is nice, etc. if one is a waiter in a restaurant trying to make a polite, deferential, and encouraging suggestion to a customer concerning what to order); (3) generalizability to other communicative functions; (4) the role of a given form in facilitating acquisition of another form; (5) acceptability in terms of perceptual strategies; and (6) degree of markedness in terms of social and geographical dialects (cf. Johnson and Morrow 1977 and Morrow 1977 for additional criteria and discussion).

Our concern with grammatical complexity (among other criteria) is closely related to perhaps the most common and significant concern with respect to communicative approaches: What is the optimum combination of attention to grammar and attention to other communication skills? Van Ek (1976) has pointed out quite explicitly that the objective of his threshold level approach is only part of a second language program:

> It is obvious, then, that the present [threshold level] objective cannot be offered as the objective of foreign language teaching. It is merely offered as the minimum objective for the teaching of (mainly oral) foreign language communication. As such it can, in most cases, only be one part of a more comprehensive foreign language curriculum (p.17, his emphasis).

Various combinations of emphasis on grammatical skills and on other communication skills are suggested by Alexander (1976), Johnson (1977), and Wilkins (1978), among others, but no empirical data on learner performance under different treatments exist. Most of the communicative materials that have appeared recently (e.g. Edelhoff et al. 1978 and Johnson and Morrow 1978) tend to organize the syllabus primarily on the basis of the functions to be carried out, but do provide drills whose focus is a particular grammatical point. An example of a grammatical approach that provides drills whose focus is particular communication points may be the approach used by Savignon (1972) discussed in Section 2.1. There is no obvious way in which one could make comparisons of the effectiveness of Savignon's approach with respect to the type of approach suggested by Edelhoff et al. or by Johnson and Morrow (assuming that empirical data from tests or other instruments were available on this latter approach) without information on the similarities and differences between the groups at the pretreatment stage, information on the instruments, etc.

Our thinking, then, is that there is an overemphasis in many integrative theories on the role of communicative functions and social behavior options in the selection of grammatical forms, and a lack of emphasis on the role of factors such as grammatical complexity and transparency. Perhaps the major problem of such a distribution of emphasis at the early stages of second language learning is that the grammatical forms to be mastered will not necessarily be organized or presented in an effective manner. As Johnson (1977, 1978) and Morrow (1978) have pointed out, it seems unlikely that a syllabus organized along communicative lines can be organized equally well along grammatical lines. Thus Johnson (1977) writes:

> ...It seems reasonable to expect sentences which form a homogeneous functional grouping to be grammatically unlike. The choice of a functional organization therefore seems to imply a degree of structural 'disorganization,' to the extent that many structurally dissimilar sentences may be presented in the same unit, while what may be taken to be key examples of particular grammatical structures will be scattered throughout the course (p. 669).

Furthermore, it is not clear that the types of communicative approach that advocates of integrative approaches envision would lend themselves equally well to the teaching of different areas of grammar; for example, although vocabulary and certain aspects of morphology and syntax might be organized quite naturally in terms of communicative functions, other areas of grammar--phonology, morphological features such as gender distinctions, verb classes (e.g. -er, -ir, -re verbs in French), etc. --might not be served so well by an organization based on functions. It is perhaps because most applications of communicative approaches have been directed at advanced levels of second language learning (cf. Wilkins 1978, among others, on this point) that there is a tendency to accord grammatical factors a secondary role in the organization of communicative syllabuses.

From a purely theoretical point of view, there are at least three basic assumptions that may be largely responsible for an overemphasis on communicative functions in communicative syllabus organization.

First is the assumption that the essential purpose of language is communication. This seems to be a fundamental assumption in speech act semantics (cf. Searle 1969, for example) and in many theories of communicative competence (e.g. Campbell and Wales 1970, Habermas 1970). As has been pointed out by a number of linguists (e.g. Chomsky 1975, Fraser 1974, Halliday 1978), there is little reason to view (externally oriented) communication as more essential than other purposes of

language such as self-expression, verbal thinking, problem-solving, and creative writing. Furthermore, it is not clear how crucial the communicative role of language is with respect to Cummins's (1979) notion of threshold level or Bruner's (1976) notion of analytic competence (cf., however, Bruner 1978 for further comments). Nonetheless, the communicative purpose would seem to be the most practical concern for a general second language program (cf. Clark 1972), and an approach focussing on this purpose may help to develop more positive learner attitudes toward second language learning (cf. Palmer 1978).

Second, the assumption that grammatical form follows the communicative purpose or use of language is often taken as the main reason for adopting an approach based on communicative functions (cf. Fawcett 1975). However, such an assumption is in our view inadequate as the basis for syllabus organization for several reasons. First, it is difficult to isolate the individual purposes of language or the ways in which different purposes interact; thus even if one were to assume that communication is the essential purpose of language (an assumption that we would not support), it would be misleading to associate certain language forms with this purpose exclusively since communication is not the only purpose of language. Slobin (1977) has pointed out that the goals or uses of language may conflict with one another, and there is as yet no theory of language, language acquisition, or language change that allows one to predict with any certainty when a given purpose will take precedence over another. Second, the position that form follows purpose implies a teleological point of view (i.e. that a given form exists because it is needed for a given purpose) that is as questionable in linguistics as it is in biology and evolution (cf. Lenneberg 1964). Third, as was mentioned in our discussion of Halliday's (1973) sociosemantic approach to language, the opposite

view, namely that use serves grammatical form, is perhaps a more realistic one to adopt with respect to second language acquisition at the early stages. This opposite view even has some support in studies of first language acquisition at the early stages. Thus although young children do not seem to acquire forms that they do not need (cf. Bates 1976 and Halliday 1975, for example), they nonetheless may use a single form for many different communicative functions--where this form may be more easily acquired and in some sense 'simpler' than the forms used most often by older speakers to convey these other functions (cf. Bloom 1970 and Slobin 1971a).

Finally, Widdowson (1978) has made the assumption that in normal communication one is concerned with aspects of language use and not with aspects of grammatical usage. This is certainly a reasonable assumption as regards normal communication between native or native-like speakers of a language, although we assume that there is some attention to grammatical usage when native speakers of different dialects or registers communicate. Certainly knowledge of how to adjust (in both reception and production) to other varieties of a language is an important part of communicative competence in that language (cf. Hymes 1972 and Segalowitz 1973, for example). However, there is some reason to question Widdowson's assumption as it applies to the beginning second language learner. First, this type of learner will most likely be unable to devote much attention to the task of how to use language until he/she has mastered some of the grammatical forms that are to be used. That is, it may be difficult to focus simultaneously on use and usage, particularly at early stages (cf. Stern 1975). Savignon's (1972) communicative competence group indicated this in their evaluation of their own performance on the communication tests she administered, as we mentioned above. Second, B.J. Carroll's (1978)

tentative findings on the tolerance levels of native speakers to grammatical errors and use errors in the speech of nonnative speakers (which we also mentioned above) would suggest that native speakers pay more attention to second language learners' grammatical usage than to their sociolinguistic use of language. In spite of these reservations, we think it is reasonable and important to adopt the position that second language learning will proceed more effectively when grammatical usage is not abstracted from meaningful context (as pointed out by Macnamara 1974 and Oller and Obrecht 1968, for example). This seems to be what Widdowson had in mind in making the assumption that use, not usage, is focussed on in normal conversation. Thus he states:

> By focussing on usage, therefore, the language teacher directs the attention of the learner to those features of performance which normal use of language requires him to ignore....The way he is required to learn the foreign language conflicts with the way he knows language actually works and this necessarily impedes any transfer [of knowledge of language use] which might otherwise take place. By effectively denying the learner reference to his own experience the teacher increases the difficulty of the language learning task. A methodology which concentrates too exclusively on usage may well be creating the very problems it is designed to solve (Widdowson 1978:17-18).

To summarize, then, we find that there is little theoretical motivation for the overemphasis on language functions and lack of emphasis on grammatical complexity and the like that is characteristic of Munby's model of communicative competence and of the organization of many communicative approaches. It seems that factors such as grammatical complexity should be considered in the process of specifying the grammatical forms and communicative functions that relate to learners' sociolinguistic needs.

2.4. General comments

In guise of a conclusion to this section, we wish to make three

general comments relating to the theories of communicative competence that we have reviewed.

First, with the exception of Savignon (1972) and Stern (1978, 1979), no communicative competence theorists have devoted any detailed attention to communication strategies that speakers employ to handle breakdowns in communication: for example, how to deal with false starts, hesitations, and other performance factors, how to avoid grammatical forms that have not been mastered fully, how to address strangers when unsure of their social status--in short, how to cope in an authentic communicative situation and how to keep the communicative channel open. We consider such strategies to be an important aspect of communicative competence that must be integrated with the other components in an adequate theory of communicative competence. We only wish to call attention to the general lack of discussion of these strategies at this point; they will be discussed in the following section.

Second, few of these theories deal rigorously with a range of criteria sufficiently broad for establishing the sequencing of semantic concepts, grammatical forms, and communicative functions in a communicative approach. In making such decisions with respect to the semantic concepts (e.g. notions such as time, place) that are to be dealt with by the learner, reference must be made primarily to theories of cognitive psychology (cf. Piaget 1954, for example). The sequencing of grammatical forms will be informed mainly by theories of language (e.g. Chomsky 1965, Halliday 1973), language acquisition (e.g. Bates 1976, Bloom 1970, Krashen in press), and psycholinguistics (e.g. Fodor, Bever, and Garrett 1974, Slobin 1971b). It is not clear in the literature how the sequencing of communicative functions is to be determined (cf. Morrow 1977 and Widdowson 1975 on this point). We

have suggested that those functions whose appropriateness conditions are more universal, or at least more similar to those that hold for the learner's native language and culture, may be introduced before those functions having more idiosyncratic appropriateness conditions. The generalizability of functions from one communicative event to another, the complexity of the grammatical forms appropriate to express the functions, the range of sociolinguistic variables crucially involved in a function, and the interrelationships among these sociolinguistic variables that must be known (i.e. the delicacy of content according to Morrow 1977) are all important factors to consider in deciding on the sequencing of functions. It should be clear that the sequencing of behavioural objectives in a communicative approach must be based on the interaction of theories such as those just mentioned.

Finally, little serious attention has been devoted to criteria for evaluation and levels of achievement/proficiency with respect to a given theory of communicative competence. However, B.J. Carroll (1978b) has suggested such criteria and definitions of levels based on the notion of 'target level' that Munby (1978) has attempted to identify. Carroll has distinguished three levels of performance (viz. basic, intermediate, and advanced) with respect to the four skill areas of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These levels are defined with reference to ten evaluation criteria: five that in Carroll's view are useful mainly in test construction (viz. size, complexity, range, speed, and flexibility) and five useful mainly in performance assessment (viz. accuracy, appropriacy, independence, repetition, hesitation). In addition Morrow (1977) has suggested that a discrete-point test of communicative competence may be expected to address the learner's competence in assessing a communicative interaction in the following terms:

A. The settings to which it might be appropriate.
B. The topic which is being presented.
C. The function of the utterance.
D. The modality /or attitude/ adopted by the speaker/writer.
E. The pre-suppositions behind the utterance.
F. The role the speaker/writer is adopting.
G. The status implicit in the utterance.
H. The level of formality on which the speaker/writer is conducting the interaction.
I. The mood of the speaker/writer. (p. 28)

He also has suggested that 'communication tasks' be adopted to serve as integrative tests of the learner's competence to produce and understand actual communication in the oral or written mode (Morrow 1977). However, here there is no general list of evaluation criteria provided; rather, different criteria such as comprehensibility, appropriateness, accuracy, and naturalness of the learner's response are proposed for each individual communication task. We think that it is important to note that Morrow includes grammatical accuracy among the evaluation criteria for integrative tests but excludes it for discrete-point tests of communicative competence. While we support the view that an integrative test of communicative competence must not ignore grammatical accuracy (a view that follows from our definition of communicative competence in Section 1.2), we are nonetheless aware of Clark's (1972) concern that

> the mixing of communicative and linguistic criteria in a single testing system or rating scheme serves only to obscure the distinction between the two types of measurement and decrease the validity of the test as a direct measure of communicative proficiency (p. 126).

Clark also points out that scoring systems such as the one used in the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) Oral Proficiency Interview (cf. Jones 1975 and in press for discussion) does not completely avoid this problem.

It would be premature to concern ourselves with evaluation criteria in more detail at this point since we have not arrived at a

well-defined theory of communicative competence to suit our needs and interests. We will suggest a tentative outline of such a theory in the following section and examine some of its more obvious implications for teaching and testing communication skills. We find that the classification of language skills that Munby (1978) has proposed is a valuable starting point in developing evaluation criteria and that the testing formats proposed by Morrow (1977) are of considerable interest and use in a communicative approach. Helpful summaries of research on discrete-point and integrative tests of communicative competence have been prepared by Jones (1977) and Oller (1976), and there is a recent and representative set of papers on testing speaking proficiency in Clark (1978).

3

Toward an Adequate Theory of Communicative Competence

In this section we will first present a set of guiding principles for a communicative approach to second language teaching, then outline a theory of communicative competence adequate to support such an approach, and finally sketch some of the implications of such a theory for second language teaching and testing.

3.1. Guiding principles for a communicative approach

Based primarily on the discussion so far in this paper, there seem to be five important principles that must guide the development of a communicative approach for a general second language program.

1. Communicative competence is composed minimally of grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and communication strategies, or what we will refer to as strategic competence.[4] There is no strong theoretical or empirical motivation for the view that grammatical competence is any more or less crucial to successful communication than is sociolinguistic competence or strategic competence. The primary goal of a communicative approach must be to facilitate the integration of these types of knowledge for the learner, an outcome

4. We are grateful to A.S. Palmer (personal communication) for suggesting this term. See Palmer (1978) for references to his valuable work in the area of communication strategies.

that is not likely to result from overemphasis on one form of competence over the others throughout a second language program.

2. A communicative approach must be based on and respond to the learner's communication needs. These needs must be specified with respect to grammatical competence (e.g. the levels of grammatical accuracy that are required in oral and written communication), sociolinguistic competence (e.g. needs relating to setting, topic, communicative functions), and strategic competence (e.g. the compensatory communication strategies to be used when there is a breakdown in one of the other competencies). Following Widdowson (personal communication) it is to be expected that communication needs in each of these areas will be of two types: first, those that are relatively fixed and terminal, and second, those that are transitional and interim, changing with factors such as the age of the learners and their stage in the language learning process (cf. Stern 1979 for interesting discussion). It is particularly important to base a communicative approach on the varieties of the second language that the learner is most likely to be in contact with in a genuine communicative situation, and on the minimum levels of grammatical competence and sociolinguistic competence that native speakers expect of second language learners in such a situation and that the majority of second language learners may be expected to attain (cf. Van Ek 1976 on this last point). Methodologies for communication needs analyses have been suggested by Munby (1978) and Richterich (1973)--cf. the related work of Sampson (1978), Savard (1978), and Tough (1977).

3. The second language learner must have the opportunity to take part in meaningful communicative interaction with highly competent speakers of the language, i.e. to respond to genuine communicative needs in realistic second language situations. This principle is a

challenging one to teachers and program designers, but is motivated strongly by the theoretical distinction between communicative competence and communicative performance. It is significant not only with respect to classroom activities but to testing as well. J.B. Carroll (1961) has argued for testing in more realistic communicative settings (i.e. performance) as follows:

> If we limit ourselves to testing only one point at a time, more time is ordinarily allowed for reflection than would occur in a normal communication situation, no matter how rapidly the discrete items are presented (p. 34).

Oller (in press) has expressed a similar point of view. Clark (1972) has stressed the disadvantages of measuring communication skills through indirect (e.g. pencil-and-paper) tests and the use of correlational procedures. He states:

> ...Indirect tests of proficiency do not provide an opportunity for the student to try out his language competence in realistic communication situations. Although they may correspond in a statistical sense to direct tests of proficiency, paper-and-pencil tests, tape-recorded listening and speaking tests, and similar measures cannot have the same psychological value for the student or the same instructional impact. For this reason alone, administration of a direct test of communicative proficiency at one or more points in the student's language-learning career would be a very worthwhile undertaking (Clark 1972:132).

We think that exposure to realistic communication situations is crucial if communicative competence is to lead to communicative confidence.

4. Particularly at the early stages of second language learning, optimal use must be made of those aspects of communicative competence that the learner has developed through acquisition and use of the native language and that are common to those communication skills required in the second language. It is especially important that the more arbitrary and less universal aspects of communication in the second language (e.g. certain features of the grammatical code) be

presented and practised in the context of less arbitrary and more universal aspects (e.g. the fundamental appropriateness conditions in making a request, the basic rules of discourse involved in greeting a peer).

5. The primary objective of a communication-oriented second language program must be to provide the learners with the information, practice, and much of the experience needed to meet their communicative needs in the second language. In addition, the learners should be taught about language primarily (although not exclusively) in the first language program, i.e. taught, for example, about grammatical categories, communicative functions, appropriateness conditions, rules of discourse, and registers. The learners should also be taught about the second language culture primarily (although not exclusively) through the social studies program in order to provide them with the sociocultural knowledge of the second language group that is necessary in drawing inferences about the social meanings or values of utterances (cf. Widdowson 1978 for discussion of these points). It is felt that such a curriculum-wide approach to the development of communicative competence in the second language may also facilitate (and perhaps encourage--cf. Savignon 1972) continued study of this language (cf. Van Ek 1976 on this point).

3.2. A proposed theoretical framework for communicative competence

Our own tentative theory of communicative competence minimally includes three main competencies: grammatical competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. The purpose of this section is to briefly outline the contents and boundaries of each of these areas of competence.

In proposing this theoretical framework, we have in mind several

general assumptions about the nature of communication and of a theory of communicative competence. Following Morrow (1977), we understand communication to be based in sociocultural, interpersonal interaction; to involve unpredictability and creativity; to take place in a discourse and sociocultural context; to be purposive behaviour; to be carried out under performance constraints; to involve use of authentic (as opposed to textbook-contrived) language; and to be judged as successful or not on the basis of behavioural outcomes. We assume with Candlin (1978) that the relationship between a proposition (or the literal meaning of an utterance) and its social meaning is variable across different sociocultural and discourse contexts, and that communication involves the continuous evaluation and negotiation of social meaning on the part of the participants. We also agree with Palmer (1978) that genuine communication involves the 'reduction of uncertainty' on behalf of the participants; for example, a speaker asking a (nonrhetorical) question will not know the answer in advance, but this uncertainty will be reduced when an answer is provided. Finally, in keeping with the integrative theories discussed in Section 2.3, communication will be understood to involve verbal and nonverbal symbols, oral and written modes, and production and comprehension skills.

We assume that a theory of communicative competence interacts (in as yet unspecified ways) with a theory of human action and with other systems of human knowledge (e.g. world knowledge). We assume further that communicative competence, or more precisely its interaction with other systems of knowledge, is observable indirectly in actual communicative performance. These assumptions have been discussed in Section 1.2.

The theoretical framework that we propose is intended to be

applied to second language teaching and testing in line with the guiding principles presented in Section 3.1. The communicative approach that we envision is thus an integrative one in which emphasis is on preparing second language learners to exploit--initially through aspects of socio-linguistic competence and strategic competence acquired through experience in communicative use of the first or dominant language--those grammatical features of the second language that are selected on the basis of, among other criteria, their grammatical and cognitive complexity, transparency with respect to communicative function, probability of use by native speakers, generalizability to different communicative functions and contexts, and relevance to the learners' communicative needs in the second language. Our thinking in developing this theoretical framework and communicative approach owes much to the work of Allen and Widdowson (1975), Halliday (1970), Hymes (1967, 1968), Johnson (1977), Morrow (1977), Stern (1978), Wilkins (1976), and Widdowson (1978).

Grammatical competence. This type of competence will be understood to include knowledge of lexical items and of rules of morphology, syntax, sentence-grammar semantics, and phonology. It is not clear that any particular theory of grammar can at present be selected over others to characterize this grammatical competence, nor in what ways a theory of grammar is directly relevant for second language pedagogy (cf. Chomsky 1973 on this point), although the interface between the two has been addressed in recent work on pedagogical grammars (cf. Allen and Widdowson 1975, for example). Nonetheless, grammatical competence will be an important concern for any communicative approach whose goals include providing learners with the knowledge of how to determine and express accurately the literal meaning of utterances.

Sociolinguistic competence. This component is made up of two sets

of rules: sociocultural rules of use and rules of discourse. Knowledge of these rules will be crucial in interpreting utterances for social meaning, particularly when there is a low level of transparency between the literal meaning of an utterance and the speaker's intention.

Sociocultural rules of use will specify the ways in which utterances are produced and understood appropriately with respect to the components of communicative events outlined by Hymes (1967, 1968). The primary focus of these rules is on the extent to which certain propositions and communicative functions are appropriate within a given sociocultural context depending on contextual factors such as topic, role of participants, setting, and norms of interaction. A secondary concern of such rules is the extent to which appropriate attitude and register or style are conveyed by a particular grammatical form within a given sociocultural context. For example, it would generally be inappropriate for a waiter in a restaurant to actually command a client to order a certain menu item, regardless of how the proposition and communicative function were expressed grammatically; likewise, inappropriate attitude and register would be expressed if a waiter in a tasteful restaurant were to ask, 'O.K., chump, what are you and this broad gonna eat?' in taking an order. It should be emphasized that it is not clear that all of the components of speech events that Hymes and others have proposed are always necessary to account for the appropriateness of utterances or that these are always the only components that need to be considered.

Until more clear-cut theoretical statements about rules of discourse emerge, it is perhaps most useful to think of these rules in terms of the cohesion (i.e. grammatical links) and coherence (i.e. appropriate combination of communicative functions) of groups of utterances (cf. Halliday and Hasan 1976 and Widdowson 1978 for

discussion). It is not altogether clear to us that rules of discourse will differ substantively from grammatical rules (with respect to cohesion) and sociocultural rules (with respect to coherence). However, the focus of rules of discourse in our framework is the combination of utterances and communicative functions and not the grammatical well-formedness of a single utterance nor the sociocultural appropriateness of a set of propositions and communicative functions in a given context. Also, rules of discourse will presumably make reference to notions such as topic and comment (in the strict linguistic sense of these terms) whereas grammatical rules and sociocultural rules will not necessarily do so (cf. Widdowson 1978).

Strategic competence. This component will be made up of verbal and nonverbal communication strategies that may be called into action to compensate for breakdowns in communication due to performance variables or to insufficient competence. Such strategies will be of two main types: those that relate primarily to grammatical competence (e.g. how to paraphrase grammatical forms that one has not mastered or cannot recall momentarily) and those that relate more to sociolinguistic competence (e.g. various role-playing strategies, how to address strangers when unsure of their social status). We know of very little work in this area (though see work by Duncan 1973, Fröhlich and Bialystok in progress, and Tarone, Cohen, and Dumas 1976, as well as relevant discussion by Candlin 1978, Morrow 1977, Stern 1978, 1979, and Walters 1978). Knowledge of how to use such strategies may be particularly helpful at the beginning stages of second language learning, and it is to be expected that the need for certain strategies may change as a function of age and second language proficiency. Furthermore, as Stern (1978) has pointed out, such 'coping' strategies are most likely to be acquired through experience in real-life communication situations

but not through classroom practice that involves no meaningful communication.

Within each of the three components of communicative competence that we have identified, we assume there will be a subcomponent of probability rules of occurrence. These rules will attempt to characterize the 'redundancy aspect of language' (Spolsky 1968), i.e. the knowledge of relative frequencies of occurrence that a native speaker has with respect to grammatical competence (e.g. the probable sequences of words in an utterance), sociolinguistic competence (e.g. the probable sequences of utterances in a discourse), and strategic competence (e.g. commonly used floor-holding strategies). Proposals for the formal expression of such rules are discussed by Labov (1972), where it is claimed that various features of the sociolinguistic and grammatical contexts combine to condition the frequency of use of a given rule of grammar. The importance of such rules for communicative competence has been stressed by Hymes (1972) and Jakobovits (1970) and suggested in the work of Levenston (1975), Morrow (1977), and Wilkins (1978). Related to the discussion of these rules is the proposal that authentic texts be used in the second language classroom from the very beginning (cf. Morrow 1977 for discussion). Although much work remains to be done on the form of such probability rules and the manner in which they are to be acquired, the second language learner cannot be expected to have achieved a sufficient level of communicative competence in the second language, in our opinion, if no knowledge of probability of occurrence is developed in the three components of communicative competence.

In proposing such a theoretical framework for communicative competence, it is expected that the classification of language skills proposed by Munby (1978:Chapter 7) will serve as an initial indication

of the types of operations, subskills, and features that are involved in successful communication. Certainly there will be modifications to this classification scheme (e.g. the addition of skills relating to strategic competence), just as there will no doubt be modifications to our proposed theoretical framework. For now we would like to briefly discuss the general manner in which this theoretical framework might be applied in a communicative approach to second language teaching and testing.

3.3. Implications for a communicative approach to teaching

Adoption of the theoretical framework that we have proposed has interesting implications in four main areas of second language teaching: syllabus design, teaching methodology, teacher training, and materials development.

With respect to syllabus design, we acknowledge Morrow and Johnson's (1977) concern that a second language syllabus organized on the basis of communicative functions may be disorganized with respect to grammar. Furthermore, we have argued in Sections 2.2 and 2.3 that such grammatical disorganization may have more serious negative consequences for the effectiveness of second language learning at the introductory stages of study rather than at more advanced stages. However, there are two reasons for proposing a functionally organized communicative approach for all stages of second language learning. First, it is by no means an established fact that a functionally organized approach cannot achieve a level of grammatical organization that is adequate for effective second language teaching and learning: this is still an open question as far as we know. Although many of the functionally organized approaches that we have examined do seem to lack grammatical organization (cf. Piepho et al. 1978, Van Ek 1976, for example), there are no

empirical data on the relative effectiveness or ineffectiveness of such approaches. Furthermore, there may be means of introducing an adequate level of grammatical sequencing into a functionally organized approach by: (i) making use of grammatical sequencing criteria--e.g. degrees of complexity, generalizability and transparency with respect to functions, and acceptability in terms of perceptual strategies--in selecting the grammatical forms to be introduced in covering a given function; (ii) treating such grammatical sequencing criteria as an essential subset of the set of criteria used to determine functional sequencing; (iii) making use of repetitions of grammatical forms in different functions throughout the syllabus (assuming that such forms are partially specified on the basis of their generalizability); and (iv) devoting a certain proportion of classroom time and textbook coverage to discussion of and/or practice on new or especially difficult grammatical points and on interrelationships among various points (as implemented in the course materials prepared by Johnson and Morrow 1978, for example). Other possibilities will no doubt suggest themselves in the course of research on achieving the optimal balance between functional and grammatical organization at a given stage of study.

The second and perhaps more important reason for proposing a functionally organized approach for all stages of second language learning has to do with the 'face validity' of the materials and syllabus on which it is based. It is our view that a functionally based communicative approach--in particular, one in which units are organized and labelled with reference to communicative functions--is more likely to have positive consequences for learner motivation than is a grammatically based communicative approach--in particular, one in which units are organized and labelled with reference to grammatical forms. There are two quite subjective reasons for our view. First,

Tucker (1974) has pointed out that students who are uninterested in, frustrated by, and perform poorly in a grammatically organized second language program may be encouraged and more motivated in a program where emphasis is put on use of language in meaningful communication. Second, Segalowitz (1976) has reported that second language learners of French who have achieved a fairly high level of grammatical competence in this language through (grammatically organized) classroom training but lack training in sociolinguistic (or communication) skills tend to have a negative attitude toward French and toward native French speakers when required to interact with them in this language. Segalowitz suggests that this negative attitude may be a form of projection of the discomfort the learners experience in being constrained by their own 'communicative incompetence'. We think, then, that a grammatically based communicative approach risks being viewed by both teachers and learners as 'more of the same', evoking all of the ancillary frustrations, negative attitudes, and low levels of motivation. On the other hand, a functionally organized communicative approach may be associated less with these negative feelings and more with a highly useful and visible purpose of second language study, namely communication.

One further point to make with respect to syllabus organization is that a more natural integration of knowledge of the second language culture, knowledge of the second language, and knowledge of language in general is perhaps accomplished through a communicative approach such as the one we have suggested rather than through a more grammatically based approach (cf. Macnamara 1974 and Tucker 1974 on this point). To the extent that the development of such knowledge is a part of the overall objectives of a second language program, then a communicative approach may be preferred to a grammar based one.

With respect to teaching methodology, it is crucial that classroom activities reflect, in the most optimally direct manner, those communication activities that the learner is most likely to engage in (cf. Savignon 1972, for example). Furthermore, communication activities must be as meaningful as possible and be characterized (at increasing levels of difficulty) by aspects of genuine communication such as its basis in social interaction, the relative creativity and unpredictability of utterances, its purposefulness and goal-orientation, and its authenticity (cf. Morrow 1977 for discussion of these points). Examples of activities prepared with these characteristics of communication in mind are suggested by Candlin (1978), Johnson and Morrow (1978), Morrow and Johnson (1977), and Paulston and Bruder (1976).

There are several important implications of our theoretical framework for teacher training. First, we agree with Morrow (1977) that the role of the teacher in the second language classroom must undergo a change if a communication based approach is adopted; that is, the teacher will have to take on 'an activating role as the instigator of situations which allow students to develop communication skills' (p. 10). However, we think that it is important to emphasize that this role must be viewed as a complementary and not alternative one to the didactic role of the teacher--he/she must still teach, particularly at the early stages. Second, in view of the greater emphasis placed on the teacher's role as an instigator of and participant in meaningful communication, the teacher must have a fairly high level of communicative competence in the second language in order to carry out this role effectively. It is not clear that current teacher training provides for such levels of communicative competence or stresses the components of communicative competence and the view of language (i.e. emphasis on use) that we have outlined in our theoretical approach. Certainly

such teacher training will be crucial to the success of a communicative approach such as the one we envision (cf. Dodson 1978 on this point). The work of Palmer (1978) on classroom activities that are geared to teachers with different levels of communicative competence in the second language is especially relevant in this light.

Finally, although perhaps most of the current textbooks now in use in second language courses will not be appropriate for the type of approach that we have suggested, we agree with Johnson (1977) that the development of functionally organized textbooks is still premature, owing to the lack of research on communicative syllabus design. However, some texts to be used in communicative second language courses have already appeared or are in preparation (cf. Allen and Widdowson 1978, Johnson and Morrow 1978, and Piepho et al. 1978, for example), and it is to be expected that such materials contain useful information f.. our purposes and will be the topic of much fruitful empirical investigation. It is also hoped that the question of whether or not native texts should be incorporated into second language classroom materials will be addressed in such investigation.

3.4. Implications for a communicative testing program

Two important general implications of our theoretical framework for testing communication in a second language are the following.

First, the fundamental theoretical distinction that we have accepted between communicative competence and performance suggests that communicative testing must be devoted not only to what the learner knows about the second language and about how to use it (competence) but also to what extent the learner is able to actually demonstrate this knowledge in a meaningful communicative situation (performance). It has been emphasized quite frequently (e.g. by J.B. Carroll 1961,

Clark 1972, Jones 1977, Morrow 1977 and in press, Oller 1976) that pencil-and-paper tests now in use do not necessarily give a valid indication of second language learners' skills in performing in actual communicative situations. Our theoretical framework suggests the general boundaries and contents of communicative competence that are necessary and important for this type of performance. We think that it is important to empirically study the extent to which competence-oriented tests are valid indicators of learners' success in handling actual performance. However, actual performance tasks such as those dealt with in the FSI Oral Proficiency Interview or those developed by Savignon (1972) would seem to have more face validity with respect to communication skills in that such tasks correspond more directly to normal language use where an integration of these skills is required with little time to reflect on and monitor language input and output (as noted by J.B. Carroll 1961 and mentioned above). One would thus not want to ignore performance tests completely in a communicative testing program even if more competence-oriented tests that correlated highly with actual performance were developed (cf. Clark 1972--quoted above--on this point). However, one might wish to make more use of performance tests (tasks) informally in the classroom and perhaps at stages other than the initial ones in second language study so as not to risk frustrating the beginner (cf. Morrow 1977 and the findings on integrative motivation presented by Savignon 1972 and discussed in Section 2.1)

Second, although it has been argued that integrative type tests must be used to measure communicative competence (e.g. Oller 1976), it seems that discrete-point tests will also be useful in our proposed communicative approach. This is because such tests may be more effective than integrative tests in making the learner aware of and in

assessing the learner's control of the separate components and elements of communicative competence. This type of test would also seem to be easier to administer and score in a reliable manner than is a more integrative type of test. While it also seems that discrete-point tests may be more suitable for assessing communicative competence and integrative ones more suitable for assessing actual communicative performance, this may not necessarily be a rigid division of labor. For example, a test designed to assess grammatical accuracy might be considered to have more of a discrete-point orientation if it consisted of items such as (1)--

(1) Select the correct preposition to complete the following sentence:

We went _____ the store by car.

(a) at; (b) on; (c) for; (d) to.

but more of an integrative orientation if it were composed of items such as (2)--

(2) The sentence underlined below may be either grammatically correct or incorrect. If you think it is correct, go on to the next item; if you think it is incorrect, correct it by changing, adding, or deleting only one of its elements.

We went at the store by car.

That is, it is possible to view the discrete-point versus integrative distinction as a continuum along which tests of communicative competence and tests of actual communicative performance may be arranged (cf. Davies 1975 and Morrow in press for discussion of this point).

Aside from these general implications, a more elaborate and fine-grained description of our theoretical framework will also guide selection of evaluation criteria and acceptable levels of proficiency at different stages of second language study. Such selection will be informed primarily by the specification and sequencing of behavioural objectives, cognitive-semantic notions, grammatical forms, communicative

functions, and sociolinguistic variables. Work in these areas by B.J. Carroll (1978b), Morrow (in press), Munby (1978), Van Ek (1976), and Wilkins (in preparation) seems quite promising, and should be of help in fleshing out our theoretical framework and its implications.

There are, of course, several aspects of test development for which our theoretical framework has less than obvious implications. For example, it is not clear how reliable scoring procedures are to be established with respect to the appropriateness of utterances in various sociocultural and discourse contexts. Also, there is no obvious basis for generalizing attested performance in a given context to expected performance in another context or for weighting different aspects of the theoretical framework or different evaluation criteria. Nor is it clear that criterion-referenced testing is to be preferred to norm-referenced testing on the basis of this framework; we suspect that this is a separate issue. Insightful discussion of these and other aspects of communicative test development may be found in the work of Cohen (in press) and Morrow (1977, in press).

4

Directions for Research

Throughout this paper we have suggested that many aspects of communicative competence must be investigated in a more rigorous manner before a communicative approach can be fully implemented in second language teaching and testing. Among the more critical research points bearing on implementation are the following:

1. description of the communication needs of a given group of second language learners based on factors both particular to the learners (e.g. their age, background of instruction in the second language) and particular to the speech community (or communities) in which the second language is most likely to be used (e.g. what peers talk about most often, what grammatical forms and communicative functions they use most frequently among themselves and with nonnative speakers or strangers);

2. the explicit statement of grammatical rules, sociocultural rules, discourse rules, and communication strategies considered relevant to learners' communication needs;

3. analysis of the similarities and differences between rules in the sociolinguistic components (e.g. appropriateness conditions holding for a given communicative function) in the second language and in the learners' native language;

4. investigation of the optimum balance of factors such as (i) grammatical, cognitive-semantic, and perceptual complexity, (ii) generalizability and transparency of forms with respect to communicative function, (iii) probability of occurrence, and (iv) relevance to learners' communicative needs in establishing syllabus specifications and sequencing at different levels of study;

5. study of the relation between a minimum level of communication skills in the second language for students and Cummins's (1979) psycho-linguistic notion of threshold level;

6. study of the minimum level of communication skills in the second language needed by teachers to ensure effective use of a communicative approach at a given stage;

7. development of classroom activities that encourage meaningful communication in the second language and are administratively feasible;

8. identification of the advantages and disadvantages of the use of authentic texts in addition to or in place of contrived texts at different levels of second language study;

9. development of test formats and evaluation criteria that guarantee the optimal overall balance among reliability, validity, and practicality in assessment of communication skills.

Of course, there are other aspects of communicative competence and communicative approaches that we have ignored in this study. For example, the theory of communicative competence that we have proposed focusses mainly on verbal communication skills; however, Jakobovits (1970) and Savignon (1972) have suggested that nonverbal communication skills should also be incorporated into theories of communicative competence. More research on the role of such nonverbal elements of communication as gestures and facial expressions in second language communication may reveal that these are important aspects of communica-

tion that should be accorded more prominence in the theory we have adopted. Furthermore, we have largely ignored the issue of whether or not a communicative approach should focus on reception skills before production ones or on oral before written ones (cf. Davies 1978 and references cited there for discussion of these points). Research findings in these areas will be useful in the implementation of a communicative approach.

Lastly, we think that there are still several fundamental and immediate research issues that must be addressed in considering whether or not to adopt a communicative approach at all.

A. There is need for a description of the manner in which and extent to which communication is focussed on in different second language classes in current general programs. For example, what types of communication activities are used? What are student and teacher reactions to these activities? To what extent are these activities integrated with other aspects of the syllabus? It would be particularly interesting to observe those (unstreamed) classes that are considered by program personnel (e.g. second language consultants and teachers) to be especially successful in the second language program to find out how skilled the learners are in communication with native speakers and how the syllabus and teaching methodology used in such a class differ from those used in less successful classes.

B. One must also investigate the suitability of the different aspects of a communicative approach (such as the one we have suggested) for young second language learners. We know of no clear research results on the advantages and disadvantages of communicative approaches for students in elementary and secondary school second language programs (though see Price 1978 for relevant research). Not only may learners be cognitively unprepared to handle certain aspects of communicative

competence in the second language, but native speakers of the second language may vary their level of tolerance of grammatical and socio-linguistic errors according to the age of the learner, other things being equal.

C. Somewhat related to the preceding points is the question of how to interpret the significant differences between groups of learners that Savignon (1972) found on the basis of communicative tests. What evidence is there that learners achieving significantly higher scores on such tests are perceived by native speakers as having adequate communication skills in the second language? What evidence is there that learners achieving significantly lower scores on such tests are perceived by native speakers as not having adequate communication skills in the second language? Investigation of the construct, content, and concurrent validity of various communicative tests now available will be useful in determining the extent to which levels of achievement on such tests correspond to adequate or inadequate levels of communicative competence in the second language as perceived by different groups of native speakers for different age groups of learners. This type of investigation may also provide information on how effective various (communicative or other) approaches are in satisfying the learners' communication needs in the second language.

D. It is not clear that a communicative approach is more or less effective than a grammatical approach (or any other approach) in developing the learners' 'flexibility' in handling communicative functions and interactions on which they have not been drilled. For example, Savignon's (1972) data give no information on this point since the communicative tests she administered were based largely on the particular communication skills that her communicative competence group had practised. This question of flexibility in handling unfamiliar

communication situations is important given the complexity, subjectivity, and creativity that characterize such situations (cf. Morrow and Johnson 1977). As J.P.B. Allen (personal communication) has observed, it is still not clear how to achieve an optimal balance between structure and creativity in second language pedagogy.

E. Finally, it must be determined whether or not and to what extent a communicative approach increases learners' motivation to learn and teachers' motivation to teach the second language (as suggested by Palmer 1978). We think that it is likely that both learners and teachers will find the task of learning/teaching such communicative functions as how to greet someone more useful and enjoyable than the task of learning/teaching different grammatical points such as verb tenses. Of course, such grammatical points will be covered in the classroom, but only to the extent that they are necessary to carry out a given communicative function; in this sense a communicative approach may be likened somewhat to the coating on the pill. It is also important to remember that without motivation, learners who have an adequate level of communicative competence may not have the desire to perform well in the second language; thus such students may do quite well on more competence-oriented communicative tests but quite poorly on more performance-oriented ones. In our view, sustained learner and teacher motivation may be the single most important factor in determining the success of a communicative approach relative to a grammatical one, perhaps important enough to compensate to a large extent for the various shortcomings of communicative approaches that we have tried to identify.

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